

## Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 EB-07 L-02 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 /028 W  
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R 201951Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6286

UNCLAS NASSAU 2110

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD BF

SUBJ: TORTOIS SHELL JEWELRY

REF: (A) STATE 216210; (B) NASSAU 1429

1. EMBASSY RECEIVED DECEMBER 19 DIPLOMATIC NOTE DATED DECEMBER 18 FROM MINEXTAFF REQUESTING DEPARTMENT TO DELAY ENFORCEMENT OF BAN ON IMPORTS INTO THE UNITED STATES OF JEWELRY MADE FROM THE HAWKSBILL TORTOISE SHELL BECAUSE OF HARDSHIP ON BAHAMIAN BUSINESSMEN.

2. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF NOTE: COMPLIMENTARY OPENING.  
BEGIN QUOTE TO REFER TO THE RECENT LEGISLATION OF THE UNITED STATES WHICH PROHIBITS THE ENTRY FROM THE BAHAMAS OF ANY PRODUCTS MADE FROM HAWKSBILL TURTLE SHELL. THIS LAW HAS CREATED A GREAT HARDSHIP ON SOME FIFTY BAHAMIANS WHO MADE THEIR ENTIRE LIVELIHOOD FROM THE MANUFACTURE OF TORTOISE SHELL JEWELRY. AS THIS EMBARGO WAS PLACED ON HAWKSBILL TURTLE SHELL WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE TO THIS GOVERNMENT NO MEANS WERE ALLOWED TO ENABLE THESE PEOPLE TO DIVERSIFY THE MANUFACTURER OF THEIR HANDICRAFTS. IN ORDER TO ALLEVIATE THE HARDSHIP IMPOSED ON THESE BAHAMIANS IT IS RESPECTFULLY REQUESTED THAT THE US STATE DEPARTMENT BE INVITED TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO THE FEASIBILITY OF DELAYING FOR SIX TO TWELVE MONTHS THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE BAN ON THE ENTRY OF HAWKSBILL SHELL PRODUCTS INTO THE UNITED STATES FROM THE BAHAMAS. IT IS HOPED THAT DURING THIS PERIOD MEANS CAN BE FOUND TO DIVERSIFY THE  
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LOCAL INDUSTRY OF MANUFACTURING TORTOISE SHELL JEWELRY.

COMPLIMENTARY END. END QUOTE.

3. CURTIS JOHNSON OF JOHNSON BROTHERS REQUESTED GCOB THROUGH MINISTRY OF TOURISM TO INTERVENE WITH THE USG ON HIS BEHALF. EMBASSY ECON OFFICE SPOKE WITH MINISTER MAYNAR WHO SAID "I DO NOT THINK IT WILL DO ANY GOOD". EMBASSY BELIEVES GCOB DIPLOMATIC NOTE IS A PRO FORMA EFFORT TO PLACATE MR. JOHNSON.

4. THE HARDSHIP ON JOHNSON'S BUSINESS IS, HOWEVER, REAL ONE AS OVER SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT OF HIS BUSINESS IS AMERICAN TOURISTS. JOHNSON HAS COOPERATED WITH THE EMBASSY AND OUR PRECLEARANCE CUSTOMS IN NASSAU BY PLACING A SIGN IN HIS SHOP ANNOUNCING THE BAN ON IMPORTS AS WELL AS VERBALLY TELLING CUSTOMERS. HE HS ALSO MADE ARRANGEMENTS AT THE AIRPORT FOR US TOURISTS STOPPED AT CUSTOMS WITH TORTOISE SHELL JEWELRY TO TURN OVER THE JEWELRY TO MINISTRY OF TOURISM OFFICIALS AND RECEIVE REIMBURSEMENT. JOHNSON STATES THAT HE COULD RETOOL HIS MACHINERY FOR OTHER PRODUCTS AT A COST OF \$30,000 AND A TIME LAG OF SIX MONTHS.

5. EMBASSY KNOWS THAT POSITIVE RESPONSE TO GCOB'S REQUEST IS PROBABLY NOT POSSIBLE BUT WOULD APPRECIATE RESPONSE ASAP WHETHER OR NOT THERE IS SLIGHTEST ACTION USG CAN TAKE TO HELP RELIEVE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF LEGISLATION ON THIS LOCAL BUSINESS.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ENDANGERED SPECIES, TEXT, IMPORT CONTROLS, PROHIBITED TRADE, TURTLES, DIPLOMATIC NOTES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
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**Subject:** TORTOIS SHELL JEWELRY  
**TAGS:** ETRD, SENV, BF, (JOHNSON, CURTIS)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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